the Quill

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The Quill

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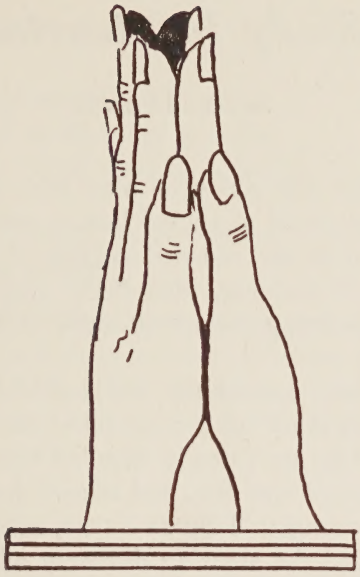


Night Prayer

Barbara Jean Fant

For nights when in your heavens stars are lit
And quiet settles in the world I know,
When beauty is so real I feel its touch
In gentle breezes whispering as they go;

For velvet stillness, trees against the sky
In lacy silhouettes against the light;
For peace that comes when I can know again
Your guiding presence in the hush of night;

For those sweet moments, sacred, still, alone,
When shadows hide the worry of the day
And I stand here enveloped in the dark
And see at last the glory of Your way;

From a full and loving heart I thank you, God.

A Study In Heartache

Allena Doggett

The smell of chalk dust was good after Miss Brill's week-end in her small dark room. The sound of scuffed loafers and the chatter and giggle of girls could be heard as they scurried to class. A few straggled into her own classroom. "Good morning, Miss Brill," they murmured, slumping into their seats and assuming various attitudes of boredom and sleepiness.

Miss Brill nervously opened the roll-book. Many years of teaching had never cured her of slight misgivings when she faced the wavering sea of hostile faces before her on an early Monday morning. She caressed the smoothly worn surface of the desk and cleared her throat. "They are a challenge to me," she thought, "I am an actress, and they are my audience." And as she remembered the amazing discovery which she had made the day before, the sea steadied, and she viewed the individual countenances with courage. How very much alike they were with their red lips, red cheeks, and sleepy eyes framed with long silky hair. A group of the girls in the back of the room whispered and snickered behind slim white hands, their long nails painted garishly. "Perhaps they are discussing the dance of last Saturday night," Miss Brill thought knowingly as she remembered the gala plans she had overheard some of the girls discussing the week before. "They are so very young," reflected the old lady tenderly. She tried to recall her own plans and dreams of long ago, but they seemed dim and far away. Her garden of memories consisted only of faded blossoms.

"Would you please be quiet while I call the roll?" She asked apologetically. The girls stared scornfully. "Alice Abernethy, Dorothy Aiden, Nell Broughton, Louise Dare . . ." She called, checking each name neatly as they answered.

Miss Brill picked up the well-worn volume of *Hamlet.* She turned the pages lovingly. "Girls," she commenced boldly, "today we are beginning the study of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* one of the greatest plays ever written. It is a study in revenge—a study in revenge," Miss Brill repeated. "Are any of you familiar with the story of Hamlet?" she ventured. Silence reigned. "Ah—well, I would like for you to read the first act for tomorrow. I—uh—think you'd be surprised if you know how many common sayings come from this play. Perhaps one of the best known is Hamlet's soliloquy:

'To be or not to be:'
she began dreamily,
'that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune . . .
----Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered.'

concluded Miss Brill in a hushed voice. Back again in the banal classroom she sighed tremblingly, searching the faces for some flicker of interest. Lila Peterson was writing a letter. Nell Broughton drummed her nails lightly on the desk as she gazed out of the window. "How could anyone keep from being swept away by the immortal speech from *Hamlet?*" she wondered. Miss Brill was sure her girls had been. "They're so young. They—they're just afraid to show it," she thought hopefully.

The bell rang abruptly. The class was in a turmoil as twenty-six girls gathered together books and pencils and hurriedly left the room. Miss Brill stood at the door watching. As the last girl shuffled out, Miss Brill stopped her. "Did—did you enjoy the dance, Anne?" she questioned timidly.

"Yes ma'am," was the noncommittal reply.

"What kind of dress did you wear?" Miss Brill pursued brightly.

"Uh—it was a blue formal," said Anne uncomfortably. She smiled vaguely and retreated down the hall.

Miss Brill watched wistfully and then turned and looked out of the open window. Groups of girls wandered along a path beneath. Miss Brill looked out with unseeing eyes.

" 'To die: to sleep; no more
And by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to . . .' "
she mused.

A group of girls strolled by. "Honestly, Miss Brill is too boring for words," said one voice.

"You aren't just kidding," was the reply, "And nosy too. I was walking out of class, and she stopped me and asked all kinds of questions about the dance, what I wore and everything. My gosh."

"The heartache and the thousand natural shocks," Miss Brill whispered.

Domain Of Dreams

Allena Doggett

I have a world, my own world. When I am in it, I am alone—alone but not lonely. I possess it with all my being, and it is dear to my heart, close to my soul. This world is my own private domain of dreams. No ugliness or disorder can trespass its invisible boundaries.

My only companion is beauty. It accompanies me in many forms—the rustle of leaves; the gurgle of a brook; the warmth of the sun; the sweet fragrance of newly-cut grass; the rich sight of yellow dandelions—golden pools in a green meadow; stately young trees standing tall and proud; ancient ones, gnarled and bent, adorned with gay apple blossoms; the magnificent thunder of the sea; a breeze caressing my cheeks and lips and playfully blowing my hair; and music, its indescribable beauty ever with me, challenging, comforting, and inspiring.

I walk across a meadow through tall waving grass. I tread a dim path, feeling the soft pine needles beneath my bare feet. I sink down upon soft velvet moss beside a rippling stream. I sail away on petals drifting down a lazy current. A light gentle wind breathes a tranquil melody into my listening ear. I hear music in the air, within my breast, everywhere. Silver strings touch my heart, conveying sadness or lightness, whate'r my mood, for without music I could never live. It is within my soul. It *is* my soul. Dreams are spun from its lyrical quality. And that is my world—my own world of dreams. And I am alone—alone with my God and myself.

If I Were A Boy

Mary Fetter Stough

If I were a boy, what fun I'd have. If I were a boy, the adventures I'd experience. If I were a boy, I'd hitch-hike over this beautiful country of ours and find out what makes it tick. On the trip I'd work at odd jobs, doing anything and everything, just to get enough money to buy my food. I'd make friends with all the truck drivers I'd meet. I've always wanted to drive one of those huge trucks with a trailer two blocks long. I could do all this—if I were a boy.

If I were a boy, I'd learn how a car motor works. I'd buy a jalopy that didn't run; and, with work and patience, I'd be able to drive at least twenty miles an hour. If I were a boy, I'd enter the Soap Box Derby. I'd have the feeling of racing down the sloping track, going faster and faster, gaining momentum. I'd have the delightful sensation of the wind on my face as I raced toward the finish line. If I lost the race, I'd be momentarily let-down, but this feeling would not last very long. This could happen—if I were a boy.

If I were a boy, I'd learn the why's and wherefore's of the radio. I'd make a small set and become a "radio ham." I'd know the thrill of contacting a station in Texas, or California, or maybe even Great Britain. If this hobby did not last very long, I'd not grieve. There'd be so many others waiting for me to try—if I were a boy.

If I were a boy, I'd have a dog. I'd call him Butch, or Spot, or Rags. I'd teach him all the tricks—dead dog, roll over, stay. I'd take him to the creek with me in the summertime. I'd lie there fishing, and Butch would chase rabbits, or flies, or just lie beside me. Butch would not be a thoroughbred. He'd be "just plain dawg." He'd be a perfect dog, at least in my eyes. If he'd fight a little, be a little smelly sometimes, or tear up the neighbors' sofa pillows, I'd cover up for him as best I could. I'd warn him against these things, but I'd love him no matter what he did. I'd have such a friend—if I were a boy.

If I were a boy, I'd go hunting. I'd know the difference between a .22 and a .44. I'd bring home rabbits and birds for mother to cook. I'd get some baby chickens and take complete charge of them. I'd keep a record of all the feed daddy paid for, and I'd pay it back with the eggs I'd sell. I'd learn the value of money by having to pay for all the food the chicks ate, in addition to trying to make a profit.

If I were a boy, I'd play baseball and basketball in high school. I wouldn't be the star, but I wouldn't be the worst player, either. In fact, I'd go to a small boys' college on an athletic scholarship. I'd hate books in high school, but at college I'd learn that French verbs and Dickens's novels somehow are necessary to know.

I'd do all this—if I were a boy. What fun I'd have!

Music

Murphy Alexander

Music is God's greatest gift to man,
Soul-inspiring, reaching to the hidden depths
Of the heart. Giving strength to those
Who have succumbed to petty ways,
Lending beauty to the plainest of features,
Making one those who share the delight
Of loving it. Music! Which makes dreams live
In the pulse beat of its soul-rending power.

Always Here

Martha Morrison

I stepped off the train in the Jacksonville station one cold December morning and felt as if I were stepping back into my childhood. It had been almost nine years since I had seen Jacksonville, and those nine years had been the period of my adolescence. Just as many young people, I felt as if my twenty-first birthday, celebrated only a few days before, had magically transformed me from childhood into worldly womanhood. Yes, I was returning to the scene of childhood memories, a woman.

I walked down the long walk leading into the station proper. The train puffed and groaned beside me. Men, women and children pushed and hastened by, rushing on to their own separate day's adventure. The sense of closeness and of singleness of purpose which had been so evident on the train, when we were all anxious to get to the station, vanished. I ceased to be part of a great whole and became Sally Harris, college student, going to her grandmother's funeral. Suddenly a chill swept over me, and I realized the loneliness which comes with being an adult.

When I got into the waiting room of the station, I was again conscious of swarms of humanity, but had little time for the feeling of loneliness to return. Mother and Aunt Lilian came up to me, and we embraced silently. They both wore the look of anxiety and strain that accompanies people who are trying to arrange things of this sort. Mother inquired about my trip, and Aunt Lilian chided me about being "still the runt of the family."

I stood there and thought of a million questions I would have liked to ask, but instead I answered their questions and tried to put up a front of normality. Yet I felt far from normal and wondered how people could feel and act normal in the presence of death.

We walked out to the car, and they supplied the details of what had happened. Grandmother had complained of feeling ill Wednesday afternoon and had gone to lie down. She called Grand-daddy about an hour later and told him to get the doctor and then slipped into unconsciousness from which she was never to return. The doctor came immediately but saw that it was hopeless, and one hour later a life which had been vibrant and vital ceased to be.

But to me the details were of little importance. What was uppermost in my mind was how it was going to feel to go to Grandmother's house and sit at her big, round, Irish table and not see her face across from me. To go in and slam the screen door and not hear her booming Irish voice telling my cousin Dot and me to slam it louder. To sit and see the Grandfather clock and not hear her repeating in true Irish brogue, "The Clock Upon the Wall." What was the use of this whole trip? I could do her no good, for she was gone. Why did I have to come and cloud my pleasant childhood memories of her in life with gloomy adult memories of her in death?

Mother and Aunt Lilian chatted in the front seat of the car. We passed over the bridge and on down the Beach Road. The palm trees were heavy with dead moss and the air coming in through a partially opened window was biting and cold. Through the mist of my own thoughts I heard Mother telling me that Dorothy, Patsy, Little Herb, and Mossie, my cousins, had arrived the night before, and were very anxious to see me again. It was the first time in nine years we had all been together. She was saying how nice she thought it was for all of us to see one another again, even if it were such a sad occasion. I half-heartedly listened, but my thoughts kept returning to days gone by.

I could still smell the bacon and eggs frying in the early morning as Dot and I arose. Since we were on our summer vacation, we did not want to miss a minute of the daylight. We would hurry into the kitchen to kiss Grandmother and squeeze her neck. She was one of the nicest people to hug I have ever known. She was short and round and soft in the way of most stout people. She had auburn hair that was cut short and close to her head; but even the bob could not keep it from curling. In the heat of the kitchen it formed little ringlets all around her face. Another vital part of the household would also be in the kitchen. This was Lois, Grandmother's colored girl, who had been with her for ten years. Lois was one of my favorite people, and I know she loved Dot and me dearly. She would pet and baby us while we were there until Grandmother would criticize her severely in loud Irish accents, all the while letting a smile play on her lips.

After teasing Grandmother for sweet buns till she would chase us out of the kitchen, promising the back of her hand if we didn't leave at once, we would go out to the cottages to see if we could think of some devil-

ment before lunch. Grandmother rented cottages to tourists, and she kept the sort of place that people loved to come back to season after season. She was meticulous in all aspects of the cottages. After one party left and before she allowed another to come in, she and Lois and Ben, a colored man who also worked about the place, would go all over the house, seeking out even the smallest particle of dirt which might be hiding from her microscopic eye. It was our favorite pastime to break up this team of scrubbers and take Lois off to the beach. Grandmother would not allow us to go into the water unless someone was with us, and she nearly always sent Lois along. We knew as long as Lois was working, she could not go; and, therefore, we, if we couldn't distract her from her labors, would have to keep dry in spite of ourselves. The most ingenious device we ever worked out for disturbing them was one that almost turned Grandmother's playful Irish temper into real anger. Grandmother had warned Lois not to break any more eggs, for they were costly; and Lois was in the habit of breaking at least two a week. We went over to the corner cottage one morning and told Lois that we had a wonderful new game to show her. She tried to tell us she was busy, but we wouldn't listen and finally persuading her that it would only take a few minutes, we proceeded with our diabolical plan. We put her hand through the wide space between the door and the wall; then we placed an egg in it. She could not get her hand out without dropping the egg, a thing which Grandmother had told her not to do, and, because of her limited intelligence, she was very much perplexed. We escaped out the side door and left Lois to ponder the problem for two hours until Grandmother returned from town and found her about ready to drop from weariness. Because of this gruelling experience she could not help with cleaning the cottage and that meant that Grandmother had to do practically all of it herself. Needless to say she was provoked with us and came the nearest to giving us a real scolding she ever had.

She would allow us to go swimming just about as often as we wished, provided Lois went with us. Her only word of caution was, "Don't go in above your ankles." Of course we never heeded this and proceeded to go in way above our heads, leaving Lois, who could not swim a stroke, to stand on the shore and scream at us to come back in. She would wring her hands and cry in the most pitiable fashion. We of course, with the typical heartlessness of children, would stay out there until she was practically hysterical and then beg her all the way home not to tell Grandmother. And she never did.

Grandmother had two Irish friends, Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Sweeny, who would come over at night and gossip with her. She didn't approve of gossip, but she would listen all the same. We would sneak in and listen too, but it wasn't until years later that I realized the real scope of what we were hearing. They all came from the Northern or Protestant part of Ireland and belonged to the Episcopal church, which they supported whole-heartedly. Yet the story is told of how they went over to the Catholic church and helped with many fish fries and suppers, actually doing more work than the people of the parish itself. Grandmother's own explanation of this act was, "Well, we are all going to the same place. It doesn't seem to matter what path we take."

Her favorite time was when all her children and grandchildren gathered at the house. We would laugh and talk, with Grandmother always laughing and talking louder than anyone else. She loved people, and she had a way of making them love her. In a typical Irish way she adored having her fortune told and loved to play cards. We would all sit around the table at night after dinner and play by the hour. There would be cokes and pretzels and friendly rivalry and most of all Grandmother and her Irish wit and her Irish way of making everyone enjoy himself.

All these thoughts turned over in my mind as we drove down the Beach Road and turned off onto Second Street and came to a halt in front of Grandmother's house. I had an almost morbid dread of stepping inside that house, for I knew there would be no friendly smile to greet me. Mother must have sensed this, for she came over and hugged my shoulders and then preceded me, as if to ward off part of the blow. My cousins and other aunts and uncles descended on me almost immediately, and for a few minutes I completely forgot the real purpose of my visit in the delight of seeing them. Suddenly Mother asked if I wished to see the body and the same sinking feeling swept over me, only this time it seemed three times as bad. I couldn't speak. All I could do was nod my head and follow her. We walked into a room which had been Grandmother's bedroom for twenty years and which now seemed to be a place utterly foreign to anything I had known before. In the center of the room was a casket with ivory carvings all around the top. It was placed on several chairs. Candles were the only means of light, and the old furniture had been pushed over to the wall so that one would have to look very close to see it.

I walked over to the casket, trying to keep the dread and horror out of my mind. I didn't want to look at her, and I had a sudden urge to

run out of the room and never return. The full force of her death and my utter helplessness to do anything about it surged over me. I thought of all the things I could have done for her and hadn't. And almost before I realized it, I was looking down at her. Then at once a great sense of relief flooded my being. She looked exactly the same as she had in life, except her features wore an exceptionally peaceful expression. The hair was still auburn, with a touch of grey. The body still looked plump and soft, and I felt an almost uncontrollable urge to lean over and hug her. The only thing wrong was that the little pearl comb which she always wore in her hair was on the wrong side. I leaned over and gently lifted it out and replaced it in the proper spot. She now looked the same as I had always remembered her.

I turned and walked out of the room. There was peace and a sort of elation in my soul as I left her. I knew that tonight after the funeral we would all return and eat supper around the big table, and that after the food and dishes had been cleared away we would play cards. There would be joking and friendly rivalry, as there had always been, with Grandmother in the center of it all. For although we would bury her flesh, her spirit and memory would live in all our hearts, and to us she could never die.

Paddle Partner

Cornelia Dick

She was as delicate and graceful as the slim canoe that we were launching; and as we carried the craft across the rocky beach, I could feel that the strength of the canoe was hers, also. The muscles in her young arms and long, tanned legs were strained as we waded into the clear, shallow margin of the lake and slid the canoe into the water. As I dipped my paddle, she put one slender foot against the shore and pushed us away.

When she paddled, her strokes were powerful and tireless; and her back was as straight as the keel of the canoe. So quiet was she, so slim and firm and graceful that she seemed hardly a person at all but rather a part of the craft which she was helping to propel swiftly and silently through the water.

To See — To Hear Spring

June Ford

To see—

A flighty bird fluttering her red petticoat
A cat stretching his pink mouth to the sun
A white dogwood growing in a grey alley
A little girl lifting her long brown hair to fan her round neck
A cat dreaming foreign dreams
A rug, darkened with winter dust, hanging on a grey line
A handful of violets playing on a creek bank
A row of green tomatoes ripening in a kitchen window
Spring onions towering from a bag of groceries

To hear—

The soft chuckle of a woman's voice
The delightful squeal of children at play
The thud of a bat against the soft earth
The clangy music of a neighbor's kitchen
The whisp-whisp of a broom on cement
The clear sound of water being shot from a hose
The high music of wind in half-clothed trees
The screech of stolen chalk on a tin sign
The click-click of heels on pavement
The throaty laugh of Negro men going home
The constant chatter of birds at their meal
The swak-swak of windows being raised against their will
The lazy sound of a screen door opening

To see—To hear Spring.

Just To Know

Mary MacPherson

I shall go to school today, although my shadow has not fallen before a teacher's desk for several years. No one will go with me, for my son will be busy with his classes by the time I arrive. He does not know that I shall visit his teacher nor that I shall sit near him while he studies, for the school psychologist said that his work would suffer if he knew I was watching him.

My son is very young, just a first grader in school. Because this is the beginning of a new world for him, his father and I decided that we would like very much to know his progress, the types of things he is learning, and the eagerness and joy with which he approaches new experiences. Thus it has come about that I have been delegated to observe Tommy's school life, as unobtrusively as possible.

It is almost time for me to leave now. Before I go, I must pass the rigid test of the full-length mirror in my room. Everything about my appearance must be exactly right, for my impression on Tommy's teacher must be good, for his sake.

Where are my keys? I really must hurry. My, but I'm nervous; one would think this was Tommy's graduation instead of just another day at school.

I wonder what he is learning today. At his age, pupils never have homework, so I must guess what his lesson might be. Perhaps he is learning to read short words like "cat" or "dog" or "house." Maybe the children are playing with the pet animals—oh, I hope Tommy has the little yellow kitten. He loves to feel her soft fur, and when she purrs he laughs with such glee! Or he—why doesn't that light turn green?—he may be learning a new game with the children. I wish I were as patient and understanding as their teacher is. She always knows how to help each child not to feel alone, not to be hurt while playing, not to fret when he must give in to others' wishes.

I was right: it is time for recess, for the children are playing in the yard. Tommy must not know that I am here, but maybe I can slip past the gate and enter the grounds without his knowing it.

Yes; here I am. There is Tommy with his teacher. They are bending over the daffodils which line the walk. Look how he loves to cup them in his hands and hold them close to his face. If only he could know the beauty of that yellow, the green of the grass, and the blue of the sky. If only he could see the . . . but Tommy was born blind.

Sunset On The Mississippi

Cornelia Dick

The chimes on the Commercial Appeal Building have ceased ringing out their five o'clock vesper hymn. The black and orange "City of New Orleans" comes racing along the track just above Riverside Drive, sounding its mournful whistle to the barges on the river and to the automobiles on the bridge. People are going home. The warehouses on Front Street and the offices of the Cotton Exchange Building are closing for the night. The citizens of Memphis are going east, and the citizens of West Memphis are driving west across the Harahan Bridge into Arkansas.

The sun is a disk of burnished copper hanging low over the dark Arkansas levee that marks the horizon. Its rays penetrate the mist above the river and flash red upon the scurrying city and the silent Chickasaw Bluffs. An occasional breeze from the river stirs the new leaves of the rose bushes on the bank and sways the grass on Mud Island, which is already partially submerged in the rising spring flood. The Mississippi is a churning mass of muddy water. The rays of the sun touch it like a fairy's wand, turning it to a river of gold. The bridge, a mighty structure of steel and concrete, is silhouetted against a grayish-blue southern sky streaked by pink and gold tinted ribbons of low-lying clouds. Men are busy at the docks pulling up gangplanks and fastening boats for the night. The sun is slipping swiftly behind the levee like a glittering coin being dropped into a slot. Through the dusk one can distinguish the red lights flashing on the West Memphis radio tower across the river. The sun is sinking faster, taking with it its long tentacles of light.

The lights of the city come on in an attempt to conquer the approaching darkness. An occasional flash of headlights can be seen on the bridge, and Riverside Drive is partially illuminated by tall street lights bordering the sloping levee. The lights come on in the city library, in the post office, and in the hotels. And the lights come on in the little boathouses along the banks of the river. The Mississippi is now a dark mirror reflecting the lights along the shore. Neon signs flash on tall buildings and are reflected by the low-hanging clouds. The glow above the city by the river is fiery against the sky as man seeks to retain what was lost in the sunset.

So Many Things To Do

Allena Doggett

As the faint rays of dawn began to appear, Mrs. O'Malley stretched her aching limbs and wearily arose. Sleep was merely a short interval in twenty-four hours when she was not standing on her feet. After donning a faded print dress and run-down shoes, she smoothed away wisps of gray hair with calloused hands. Then, glancing at her peacefully snoring husband, she turned and went into the kitchen. The floor sagged and showed through holes in the cheap linoleum, worn with much scrubbing. Lunches had to be packed and breakfast prepared in time for Mr. O'Malley to make the seven o'clock shift and for the seven children to get to school.

"Poor O'Malley," she thought as she set about her work, "Laid off four days a week the way he is, and sometimes seven, what with strikes and such. Wonder why they don't need as much coal now?" she pondered. "But even when he was workin' five days a week like he used to, there wasn't enough money for everything. Dear me; seems like you can't save a cent nowadays. He's a good man, but he has a bit of a weakness for the bottle. Perhaps the little bit I've got saved and laid away will start Ellen off to college. Oh well," Mrs. O'Malley sighed, "I can't complain. I've got my washing. We'll manage with the good Lord's help . . .

"Time for breakfast," she called, as the rest of the household noisily assembled around the oilcloth-covered table for the steaming oatmeal and coffee. "Hurry up now, or you'll miss the bus."

The ancient house, one of a row of identical ones in the coal camp, settled quietly as the last O'Malley straggled out. Mrs. O'Malley started to stack the soiled dishes automatically. There were the same tasks to be done day in and day out with little variety. She began her work.

* * * * *

Martha Howard opened one eye and stretched luxuriously. Bill, her husband, was already up and gone. "Oh, I must have slept late. I guess Bill fixed his own breakfast or ate downtown. I wish Maggie would come earlier, but she charges outrageously as it is," she grumbled. She lay there thinking, "Now let me see; what am I going to do this morning? Oh dear, such a busy day ahead of me. I'll have to tell Maggie what to do and go marketing. Mmm—what should we have for dinner tonight? Roast? Oh, I'll think about that later. Let's see—go marketing and uh—oh, today is Monday. Guess I'll have to take the clothes to the washwoman and—Monday! Woman's Club meeting. Oh heavens! Laura is going to speak

on something, and she is such a bore. Well, that takes care of this morning. What on earth shall I wear?" She slipped on a negligee and mules and flapped downstairs. "Maggie," she called, "Do you have some coffee for me?"

Martha sat down to a leisurely cup of coffee. "Hmmm. I see Joyce Ward finally snared someone—Jim Snow! But she was always such a mousey little thing," she sniffed, observing the society page of the newspaper. "What is this world coming to?"

Some time later Martha Howard slid onto the soft leather seat of her pale blue convertible and pulled gloves over her slim white hands. Her list was tucked into her purse after a consultation with Maggie, and the dirty clothes were in the back seat. "Guess I'd better take the clothes first," she murmured, driving in the direction of Finch, the coal camp.

* * * * *

A horn honked impatiently outside Mrs. O'Malley's house. She straightened her weary back, dried her soapy hands, and went to the door. "Oh, it's Mrs. Howard with the washing," she said happily, thinking of the small sum which could be added to her savings. "The Lord does provide."

"Come, help me get these out of the car," called Mrs. Howard. "Oh, why doesn't she hurry," she mumbled crossly. "I've too many things to do as it is." Aloud she said, "Thank you so much, Mrs. O'Malley." She thought, "You have to treat these folks decently but keep them in their place. That's the best way."

Mrs. O'Malley picked up the clothes absent-mindedly, admiring Martha Howard all the while. "Ain't she nice and pretty, though," thought Mrs. O'Malley; and she turned to go into the house.

Pussy Cat

Barbara Jean Fant

I have a little pussy cat;
He isn't even one;
Yet he can do so any things
That I have never done.

I've seen him jump from our front porch
And run right up our tree.
I've never even been that high
Though I am almost three.

He can run through our backyard
As fast as I say "scat".
Oh, why am I a little boy
And not a pussy cat?

Song Of A Tree

Allena Doggett

I stood in the bleak chill of a late winter afternoon, pleading. There, silhouetted against the horizon, was a tree, unyielding, mute. "Tell me," I begged.

"Tell her," the wind roared.

"Tell her," the dry leaves crackled raspingly.

"Tell her," the gray sky commanded silently.

"You, oh tree, have a feeling akin to mine, but I cannot express it," I whispered.

Then I heard a sonorous voice deep within the tree, and my heart listened as it seemed to say, "I am a lone tree standing straight and proud with my bare branches reaching outward, vainly seeking—bending, twisting, stooping to hear the murmur of the wind. I am alone, alone, alone. But I do not care. I can feel the rays of the wintry sun, the wetness of the winter rain lashing against my strong trunk. I cringe as the lightning slits the sky and the wind whips furiously across the brush. When all is still, I stand fierce and tall. And I am not afraid."

A Storm

Mae McClure

There was going to be a storm. I smelled it in the torrid, stifling air. A puff of dust arose from the dirt road. In the orchard the leaves swayed gently. And from the parched earth the grass, thirsty and dying, waited for rain. Whining old Ben pawed the ground within his stable, while outside the chickens headed for cover. Even the dog woke from his slumber to sniff at the air. Gathering the washing into her arms, the farmer's wife ran into the house, but out in the barnyard her husband was still hastily cramming new mown hay into the silo. Meanwhile, a dark threatening cloud spread over the sky.

The Battery At Night

Murphy Alexander

Peace reigns on the battery at night;
The breeze is clear, from city taints free;
I gaze with calm and pure delight
On the soft rippling waves of the sea.

The lighted ships in the background
I make in fancy my own;
And unrealized dreams may be found
Alive, in the bubbling foam.

Night and the sea are blended,
By my imaginative soul,
Into a dream unended
By wrecking against life's shoals.

Peace reigns on the battery at night;
The breeze is clear, from city taints free;
I turn from the calm, inspiring sight,
With the strength to meet reality.

The Death Of The Old Hotel

Mary Fetter Stough

The siren screeched, and the solemnity of Sunday afternoon was shattered. I was writing letters at my desk when the fire truck passed. Rushing to the window, I tried to see where the fire was. Since there was a bright glow in the west, it could have been any of the buildings downtown. As with other fires, I was drawn to this one. I ran toward the glow as if I were in a trance. Turning the corner of Maple and Main, I saw the nucleus of the fire. The old hotel was blazing, sending sparks into the clear blue sky. "Are all the people out?" I questioned, shouting to John Raehmer, the fire chief.

"We don't know, Miss Coleman. We ain't counted noses yet," he shouted back. I knew he was not blasé about the fire. Both he and I realized that panic at a fire is worse than at almost any other place.

I, along with most of the citizens of the town, was looking at the burning landmark. Suddenly from a third-story window I saw someone's face. Such a look of horror and fear I had never seen before and hope never to see again. I realized why the person was afraid: the fire had started on the second floor, and all direct escape from the third floor was impossible. It would not be very long before the roof would collapse, killing all the people caught in the hotel. The face moved to the next window, and I saw that it belonged to a woman. Her mouth seemed to be moving, but no sound could be heard above the roar of the fire. I was too far from the chief to be heard, but I shouted, "Look! A woman is trapped on the third floor!"

It was as if I had thrown a silk handkerchief into an eighty-mile wind. I watched, with dread and yet with fascination. Would the woman escape or would she die in the furnace that the hotel had become? The fire became hotter and hotter, and all of the spectators were driven back. The face disappeared from the window. I hoped the woman had become unconscious from the smoke fumes because all hope of escape was impossible. The roof of the old hotel suddenly seemed alive. It moved this way and that. And then with a great crash it fell to the first story. Above all the confusion we heard the shriek of the woman who had been trapped. The old hotel was not alone in its death.

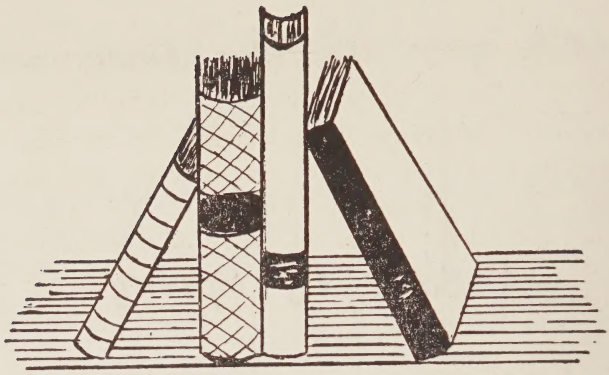
A Song Of Spring

EDITH SHEPARD

Verse is not of earth but a heavenly thing,
For this your Muse entreat if you would bring
The sweet music of poetry in a song of spring.
Then to the Muse my ardent prayer I bring,
And with her help my joyful heart shall sing.

Who would not sing a song of spring
When icy tears of winter's wind is dried,
And chilly cloak of frosty cold is cast aside?
From 'neath the earth the flowers hear the call,
And sunny blossoms come to deck each hall.

O, spring you are to me most bold,
For on forbidding winter you took hold;
You have dared to cast the icy snows away,
And now, victorious, hold all earth beneath your sway.



Book Reviews

Fred Gipson: Hound-dog Man

Gordon Freeman

Hound-dog Man is essentially the story of a young boy's great desire for a hunting dog and his hero-worship of Blackie Scantling, the famous Texas hound-dog man. The story covers an exciting coon-hunting trip and is told by the twelve-year-old Cotton Kinney, whose mother was finally persuaded to let the boy accompany the vagabonding Blackie. Cotton's friend Spud with his little feist dog, Snuffy, were included in the trip and add the comic element.

From the moment that Blackie, Cotton, Spud, and all the dogs set out on their trip, there is never a lull in the excitement and humor which follow. The reader is carried through a happy experience of youth which greatly appeals to the imagination through the realistic and very descriptive details Mr. Gipson puts into his narrative. One is constantly reminded of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' stories of plain people and the simple way of life. The story proceeds with rapidity from the treeing of the first coon to the grand climax of the "Leg-setting" party held for Dave Thilson, the horse-breaker and unhappy victim of a wild young horse. It is at this time that Blackie's love story which has been casually growing throughout the book takes a surprising turn and that young Cotton finally gets his wish for a hunting dog fulfilled.

Hound-dog Man is not an important book in its story matter, but it is interesting because it pictures a simple way of life. The characterizations are superb in their very human qualities. The entire book is contagiously funny and affords an hour's light and enjoyable entertainment.

Cheaper By The Dozen

Frank B. Gilbreth, Jr., and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey.

Betty Anne Smith

This is the story of Dad and Mother Gilbreth, who reared twelve children because "they're cheaper by the dozen." The family car called Foolish Carriage, the summer home on Cape Cod made of two old lighthouses, the relatives who were so fond of kissing, the beaus who came to call on the three oldest girls—all are introduced to the reader and become fast friends.

Dad Gilbreth dominates the book—Dad with his jokes, his surprises, his study of motion, his ideas on learning, and his continuous experiments. There is the story of the time little Bill played Dad's joke on him, and Dad couldn't take his own medicine. There is the phonograph with records for the children's French and German lessons. There is the white typewriter called "Moby Dick" which Dad Gilbreth used in experimenting with a new method of teaching typing. One experiment caused the Morse code to be spread over the walls of the summer home!

Dad is an expert on efficiency in motion. He buttons his vest from bottom to top because he can do it in three seconds but it would take seven seconds to button it from top to bottom. When, during the flapper days, the girls want bobbed hair and short skirts, Dad is finally won over to the new hair-do simply because it takes only two minutes to comb, whereas the old style requires fourteen.

And then there is Mother, who has majored in psychology and cooperates with Dad in the rearing of the twelve and on the motion study. Mother objects to punishment, but knowing her objections would be ignored, she objects vocally only to the location: "Not on the head," she exclaims when Dad administers blows. It is Mother who reads the road directions which Dad refuses to follow. If Dad makes life exciting, Mother gives it some peace and quiet, to maintain a healthy balance.

Lastly there is the "assembly." Dad whistles the "assembly," and all the children come running, with Dad timing the minutes or seconds necessary for the gathering. Then Dad makes an announcement, gives out presents, or sometimes only reports how long it took the dozen to congregate.

There is never a dull moment in the Gilbreth household, and there is never a dull moment for the reader of this delightful narrative. For relaxation and laughs, for a hilarious story of human family life, do visit Mother and Dad and their children, loveable and gratifying, and "cheaper by the dozen"!